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ABSTRACT

This booklet identifies environments for pre-school learning. Each page may serve as a poster, a reminder of activities, or as a starting point for a training session. It includes an indoor and an outdoor section. The indoor section describes an art area, a music area, and a quiet area, a housekeeping area, free space for floor play, and a science table. The outdoor section describes a woodworking area, an animal area, a sand and water area, wheel toy area, a digging area, and a shady area. Each page includes specific suggestions for activities and illustrations of participating children. (DG)

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SPACE FOR LEARNING

A PRE-SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT FOR VERY LITTLE MONEY

DHEW Publication No. (OCD) 72-51

Each page may be used as a poster as well as a reminder of activities, and as a starting point for a training session.

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
Office of Child Development
Bureau of Head Start and Child Service Programs
1972

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INDOORS

Equipment and materials should be arranged and each area should be clearly defined so that the child can see for himself how the space is to be used.

Prepared by:
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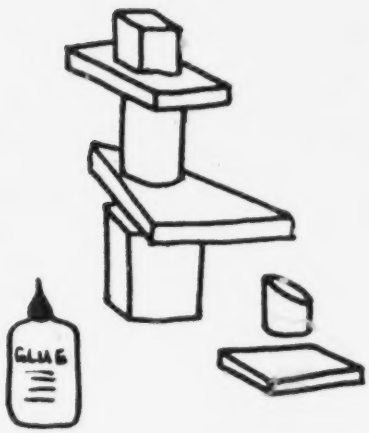
ORIGINALLY PRINTED AS
"SPACE FOR LEARNING CHART"

Art Area



WOOD GLUING: Make friends with local cabinet maker for interesting scraps. Pieces with curlicues are best. Gather all you can; you can't have too much. Use flat pieces for bases. Save soft wood for outdoor carpentry.

MAKE-IT-BOX: For a glorious gluing: parts of old clocks, feathers, beads, lost earrings, gift box decorations, party scraps, pieces of styrofoam.

COLLAGE COLLECTION: Cloth scraps, ribbon, yarn, sequins, glitter, colored sawdust, cut straws . . . you name it. *Note:* Some Head Start parents object to using food (rice, macaroni, corn meal, etc.) for craft activities.

DIP N' DAB with small sponges, hair rollers, table blocks, etc.

WALL PAPER BOOKS • COLORED TISSUE • STYROFOAM PACKING

NON-STICK PLAY DOUGH: Use 2 teaspoons of alum and boiling water to each recipe.

SCISSORS • PASTE • GLUE • SCOTCH TAPE • FELT PENS • WET CLAY

RUBBINGS over textures and raised or cut-in designs. Crayons are fine, cobblers' heel balls are especially good.

PAINTING: Easels are a must, but paper can be taped to a wall or fence. Kids also like to paint on the floor or table. Use large newsprint, but sometimes for a change, try smaller sizes. Even tiny scraps are novel. Also try other textures.

BRUSHES should be ½ to 1 inch wide. Handles should be 6 to 8 inches long. Cut off excess. Try very thin brushes with water paints for a change. Most brushes can be bought in the surplus store.

ENJOY! Don't be afraid of a mess. It can always be cleaned up. That's fun too.

Music Area

DANCING: Scarves, crepe paper streamers, balloons. *Don't teach dance steps.* Let the children move, jump, clap, stamp, sway, wiggle, creep, or just lie still, as the music tells them.

PHONOGRAPH AND AUTO HARP: (Try secondhand or local school district may be willing to lend.) Most useful, especially for non-musicians. With luck a teacher may be able to play the guitar.

VISITORS

Parents, big brothers and sisters, friends who play an instrument should be invited to perform; best are melodies the children can recognize. If possible, let them touch the instrument.

RHYTHM BAND

Drums: Ice cream cartons, coffee cans decorated in bright colors.

Triangles: Metal rods, bend and attach string.

Rhythm sticks: Dowels, cut and paint.

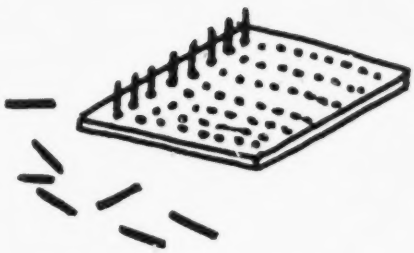
Xylophone: Pipe ends cut in various lengths, resting on foam rubber; tap with spoon. Makes lovely sounds.

Rattles: Juice cans, each filled with different stuff to make good sounds.

Quiet Area

BOOKS to look at

RUG to lie on



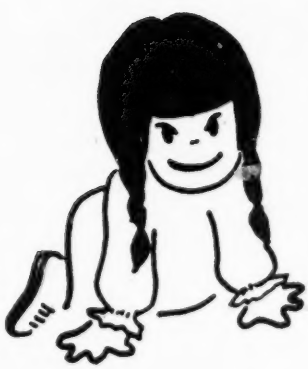
TABLETOYS: Watch for sales — puzzles, lotto games, peg boards, Rig-a-Jig, Leggos, Krazy Ikes, put-together toys.

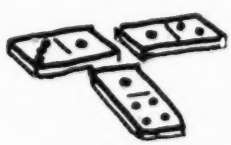
HOMEMADE: Scrap books
Feeling materials
Class pictures
Felt boards
Lotto games
Dominoes
Shoe box for doll and clothes
Sorting activities in egg box: paper clips, rubber bands, etc.
Gadget board with latches, hooks, locks, etc.
Puzzles

Threaded pipe joints, disassembled clock, iron (cut off plug)

Pencils, paper, small chalk board

Stitchery with plastic needles, burlap, embroidery hoop





LOW SHELVES
within children's reach

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Housekeeping Area

HOUSEHOLD AREAS: Show by placement of furniture location of kitchen, bedroom and living room. Have place for baby. Clothes rod or hooks should be low enough for children to reach. Boxes, drawers or dividers should be labeled "purses," "men's shoes," "scarves," etc. Have plenty of *warm soapy water* for dish washing, bathing babies, and general swishing around. Don't forget sponges, aprons and dish towels.

CLOTHES: Don't forget the *men*! Scrounge for work hats, fireman hats, hard hats, baseball caps; suits (shorten pants and sleeves), ties, belts, wallets, razors (without blades), shaving cream, etc. For the *ladies*: Be glamorous! High heels, bright colors, feathers, veils, sequins, jewelry, velvet, satin, fur, etc.

DOLLS should include brown babies, best if washable. Box will do for bed. Cut blankets to size. Clothes for dolls are OK but are usually removed and left off.

FURNITURE: Try Goodwill for unexpected treasures -- high chairs (cut legs), bassinettes, tables, dolls, blankets.

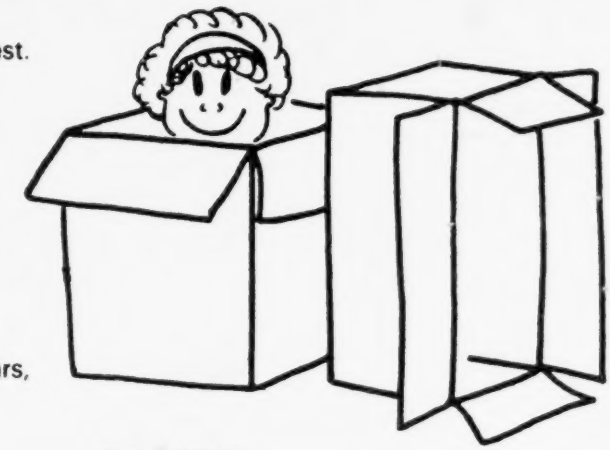
Brooms, mops and thousands of kitchen utensils:
egg beaters
pots
pans
bowls
dishes
flatware
funnels
sieves
etc.

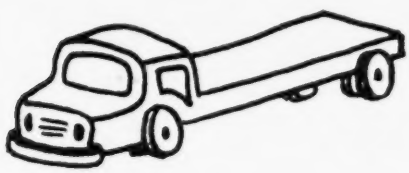
PLAY STORE!

Free Space-Floor Play

BLOCK PLAY: Unit blocks are best. Can you borrow? If not, use lumber scraps, cut to size and sand. Buy low cost cardboard building blocks.

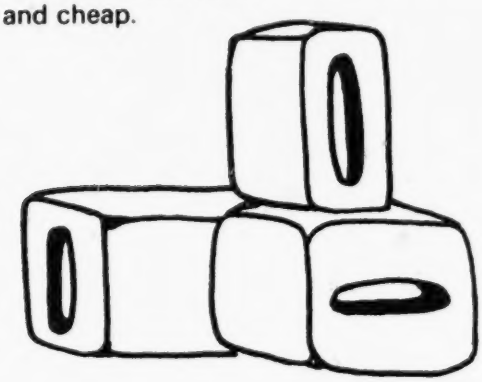
Boxes—free—all shapes and sizes. Short boards for bridges or ramps. *Add* small cars, trucks, trains, planes, people, animals. Scrounge Goodwill, second-hand shops, Sears, Wards, sometimes have bargains.

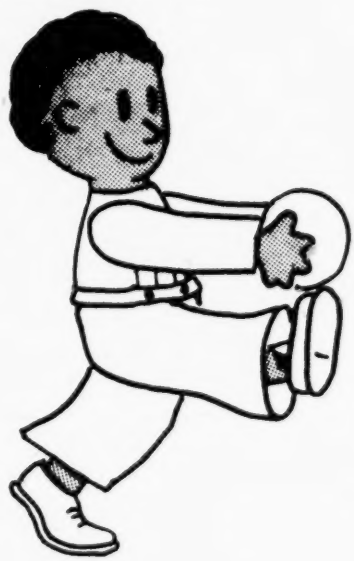




PICTURES:
Cut from magazines, in color,
roads
bridges
airports
construction equipment
fire engines
trains
farms
cities
Important: display pictures at child's eye level, about 3 feet from floor.

SHELVES: Cinder blocks and boards are quick and cheap.

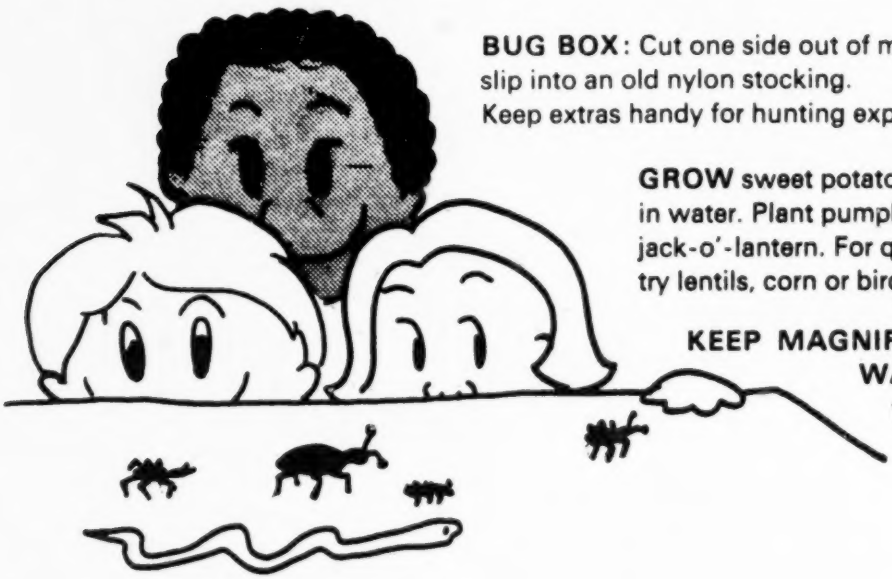




BEANBAGS: All shapes and sizes. Play "catch" or throw into target boxes.

BALLS: Knitted ones filled with old nylons are best. They can't hurt, even when thrown by your star pitcher.

Science Table



BUG BOX: Cut one side out of milk carton, slip into an old nylon stocking. Keep extras handy for hunting expeditions.

GROW sweet potatoes and carrot tops in water. Plant pumpkin seeds from jack-o'-lantern. For quick results try lentils, corn or bird seed.

KEEP MAGNIFYING GLASS HANDY
WATCH AND HOLD(?)

turtle goldfish
hamster mice
rabbit kittens
snake duck
guinea pig
snail

FEEL AND SORT

shells
stones
pebbles
pods
seeds
nuts
leaves

SNIFF SMELL TASTE BOTTLES

cinnamon
onions
coffee salt
lemon sugar
orange
nutmeg
cloves

ASK QUESTIONS
(based on observations):

What floats?
What sinks?
What will a magnet pick up?
Is air a thing? Blow a balloon.
Where does the rain go?
What makes a shadow?

Don't be in a hurry to supply answers.
Don't feel uneasy if you don't know the answer.

A good teacher, like the child, has a sense of wonder.

OUTDOORS

A variety of surfaces should be used;
both sun and shade are needed.
In fine weather, almost any indoor
activity can take place outside.

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Woodworking Area

TOOLS: Use the real thing, not toys. Hammers, saws, vise, screwdriver, hand drill, pliers, ruler, carpenter's pencil, rug sample or corks for holding nails in place. Haunt Goodwill.

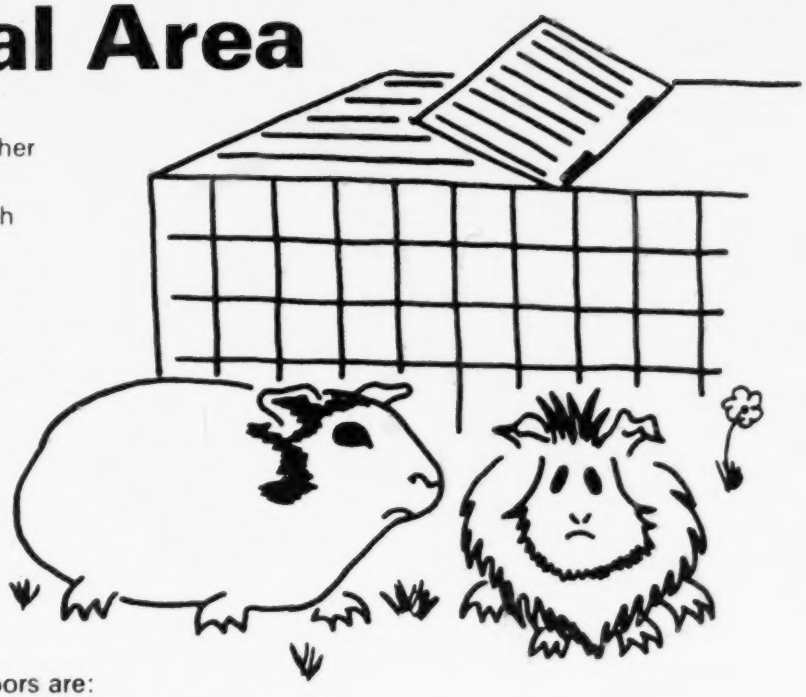
NAILS, SCREWS: Use variety of sizes, help child to choose proper length and thickness. Show him how to drill for the screws. Pick up spilled nails with magnet. Thrilling!

WOOD: Soft wood is best. Lumber yards have scrap bins for nursery school teachers, also construction sites have goodies for scrounging.

WORK BENCH: Old table cut down to child-size. Saw horses with boards fastened. Three thick logs set in triangle with heavy boards nailed at each corner.

SAFETY RULES: Supervise closely. Don't turn your back. Tools must not be removed from woodwork area. Limit number of children. Be very careful with hammers; do not permit threatening gestures. Be sympathetic when finger is hit. Blow on it. When using saw, both hands should be on top.

Animal Area



ASK an interested father to build a sturdy, but moveable animal hutch with a mesh floor.

OUTDOOR PETS

Pets that may be kept outdoors are:

rabbits
ducks
land tortoises
chickens
lambs
goats

INDOOR PETS

Pets usually kept indoors are:

hamsters (need lots of handling to tame them)
guinea pigs
rats
mice
turtles
fish
tadpoles in pond water (release outdoors when frogs)
puppies and kittens are best for visits only
snakes

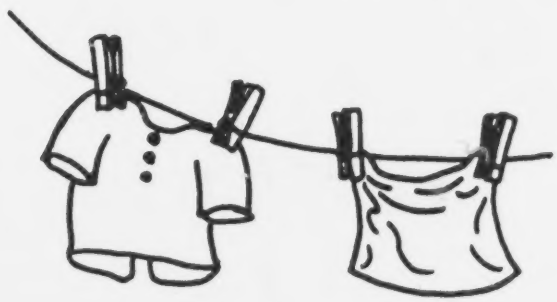
Let children feed pets. Discuss favorite foods of various species.
Ask questions . . . "How does . . . show he doesn't want any?"
"Do you think he's afraid?"
"How can you tell?"

Pets can be classified into those that eat plants and those that eat meat: those that have four legs and those that have two, or have fur, feathers, scales, etc.

Sand and Water Area

SAND should be somewhat moist, even in cool weather, so that it will hold its shape when children work with it. A little bit of dry sand is nice for funnels.

Equipment: buckets, cans, shovels, spoons, bowls, jello molds, plastic bleach bottles cut in half, and most of all, water.



WATER

A hose adjusted for a steady trickle is easiest. The children can use it by themselves without creating a massive flood.

Be available to offer technical assistance in building dams, reservoirs, rivers, lakes, etc.

In warm weather, pans of water with dishes, cups and plastic bottles delight even the youngest children, and they learn concepts about volume.

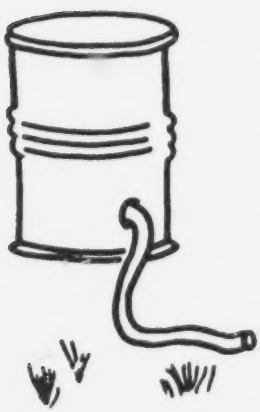
Have extra clothes handy for children who get sopping wet. Tubs of water are fine for boats and other floating objects. Ask "What floats and what sinks?"

Wheel Toy Area

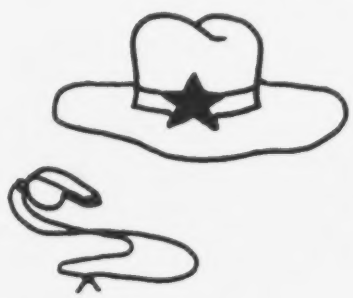
A hard smooth path or roadway is best for trykes, wagons and other child-driven wheel toys; preferably away from quiet activities.

STOP SIGNS: red, yellow and green lights can be made and painted by the children The one whose turn it is to be policeman uses the signals to direct traffic.

TRAFFIC can be regulated by using chalk to outline boundaries, crosswalks, and one-way streets.

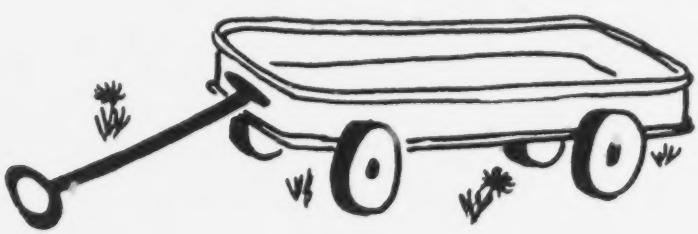


GAS STATIONS Use an old oil drum with a short length of hose. A bell counts the gallons of gas. Use bottle caps for money.



Hats are fun to wear while driving.

At the end of the school day, each driver parks his car in the "garage."



Digging Area

CONSTRUCTION WORK: Shovels from Army surplus.
Wheel barrows and wagons from Goodwill.
Appliance crates, large boxes, boards,
large trucks, steam rollers, bulldozers.

GARDENING: A place for a simple garden should be sectioned off from the construction zone. The "workmen" can dig in the earth enough to soften it for planting.

Quick crops are radishes, lettuce, corn, tomatoes, nasturtium.

The harvest may be enjoyed at snack time.

CONSERVATION AND ECOLOGY
Let's not throw the children
into a state of panic, instead . . .

Discuss positive steps for conservation and talk about the creatures that live in and on the earth, especially earth worms and snails.
How are they useful?
For soil conservation: Compare water poured on a pile of earth and water poured on grass.
Discuss what happens to earth that is not planted.

Shady Area

A quiet place

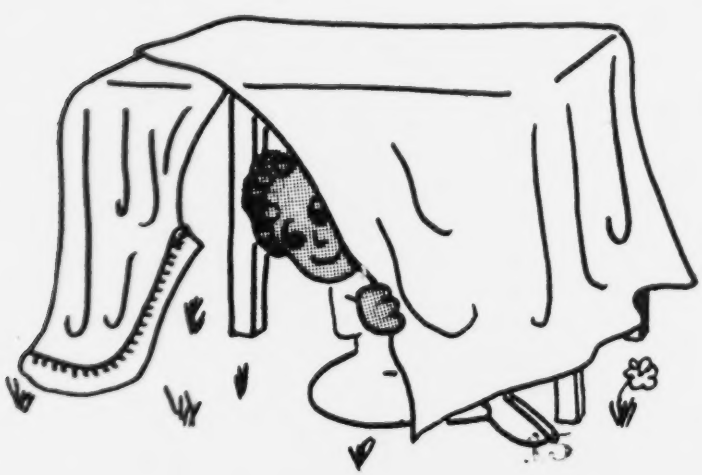
When the weather is warm, almost any activity that goes on indoors can be brought outside.

TUNNEL: Large drain pipe, sunk partway into the ground; earth and grass cover sides. Tractor tires work too.

TIRE SWING
Hang from tree away from traffic.

OLD BLANKET OR COTTON RUG for stories, table toys, or just resting.

TENT: Large blanket over a card table is a good hiding place.



SNACK AND STORY
Try outdoors, delightful!